5: Grinnell Q,T-5 (ca.1888) 1962
NF6 Blackfoot NF6

buffalo and mountain sheep horn. Basins or flat dishes were sometimes made of mountain sheep horn, boiled, split, and flattened, and also of split buffalo horn, fitted and sewn together with sinew, making a flaring, saucer-shaped dish. These were used as plates or eating dishes. Of course, they leaked a little, for the joints were not tight. Wooden bowls and dishes were made from knots and protuberances of trees, dug out and smoothed by fire and the knife or by the latter alone.

It is not known that these people ever made spears, hooks, or other implements for capturing fish. They appear never to have used boats of any kind, not even "bull boats." Their highest idea of navigation was to lash together a few sticks or logs, on which to transport their possessions across a river.

Red, brown, yellow, and white paints were made by burning clays of these colors, which were then pulverized and mixed with a little grease. Black paint was made of charred wood.

Bags and sacks were made of parfleche, usually ornamented with buckskin fringe, and painted with various designs in bright colors. Figures having sharp angles are most common.

The diet of the Blackfeet was more varied than one would think. Large quantities of sarvis berries (*Amelanchier alnifolia*) were gathered whenever there was a crop (which occurs every other year), dried, and stored for future use. These were gathered by women, who collected the branches laden with ripe fruit, and beat them over a robe spread upon the ground. Choke-cherries were also gathered when ripe, and pounded up, stones and all. A bushel of the fruit, after being pounded up and dried, was reduced to a very small quantity. This food was sometimes eaten by itself, but more often was used to flavor soups and to mix with pemmican. Bull berries (*Shepherdia argentea*) were a favorite

5: Grinnell Q,T-5 (ca.1888) 1962
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At night they were suspended within, above the owners' seat. 276
It was said that if at any time a person should walk com- 778
pletely around the lodge of a medicine man, some bad luck [784]
would befall him. Inside the lodge, no one was allowed to
pass between the fireplace and the pipe stem. No one but [756]
a medicine man and his head wife could move or unroll the
bundle. The man and his wife were obliged always to keep [386]
their faces, hands, and clothing painted with *nits'-i-san*, a
dull red paint, made by burning a certain clay found in the
bad lands.

The *Ni-namp'-skan* appears to be a priest of the Sun, and 756
prayers offered through him are thought to be specially
favored. So the sacred stem is frequently unrolled for the [755]
benefit of the sick, for those who are about to undertake a [782]
dangerous expedition, such as a party departing to war, for
prayers for the general health and prosperity of the people,
and for a bountiful supply of food. At the present time [178]
these ancient ceremonies have largely fallen into disuse. In
fact, since the disappearance of the buffalo, most of the old
customs are dying out.

The thunder is believed to bring the rain in spring, and 796
the rain makes the berries grow. It is a rule that after the 756
first thunder is heard in the spring, every medicine man
must give a feast and offer prayers for a large berry crop. I [821]
have never seen this ceremony, but Mr. Schultz was once [115]
permitted to attend one, and has given me the following
account of it. He said: "When I entered the lodge with the
other guests, the pipe stem had already been unrolled. Be-
fore the fire were two huge kettles of cooked sarvis ber-
ries, a large bowlful of which was soon set before each guest.
Each one, before eating, took a few of the berries and rubbed
them into the ground, saying, 'Take pity on us, all Above
People, and give us good.'

"When all had finished eating, a large black stone pipe [782]
bowl was filled and fitted to the medicine stem, and the

8: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

mittens, caps, and moccasins to protect their extremities from the freezing cold. They made shields from the thick hide of the buffalo's neck and used green rawhide for securely binding stone clubs, knives, mauls, and berry mashers to wooden handles. From soft-dressed buffalo skins they fashioned bags to hold their household goods when they moved camp. They made serviceable spoons and drinking cups from buffalo horns. The paunch of this animal made a tight water bucket. Buffalo sinew supplied thread, bow strings, and cord for binding both stone heads and feathers to wooden arrow shafts.

Important as the buffalo was in the life of the Blackfeet in dog days, they did not neglect the other natural resources of their country. Deer, moose, elk, and the smaller mammals provided a secondary food resource especially welcomed when buffalo were scarce. The lighter skins of deer were preferable to those of the buffalo for warm-weather clothing. Porcupine quills, delicately colored with vegetable dyes, probably were folded and sewn to their favorite garments to make them more handsome. Wild plants, especially roots in early summer and berries in fall, supplied vegetal foods which brought some variety to their heavy meat diet. The roots and leaves of many plants were prepared as medicines.

Persistent Blackfoot traditions tell of the crude clay cooking pots made and used by their ancestors.[11] Earth pigments served for face and body paints and for decorating clothing, tipis, and other skin articles. From stone they fashioned tobacco pipes and painstakingly chipped their sharp cutting tools and weapons—butchering knives, skin-scraping blades, arrow points, and lance heads. Each man either made his weapons for war and hunting or he employed a more skillful elderly man to make them for him.

Aged Indians told David Thompson of Blackfoot warfare in dog days. In the early years of the eighteenth century their bitterest enemies were the Snake or Shoshoni dwelling on the plains southwest of the Piegan, who were the frontier tribe of the

[11] John C. Ewers, "The Case for Blackfoot Pottery," *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XLVII, No. 2 (1945), 289-98.

[ca. 1850]

THE STAFF OF LIFE

Women who dressed thousands of robes for the fur trade each year also prepared hairy buffalo robes for the winter overclothing and bedding of their own families. Robes were cut up to make hair-lined mittens, winter caps with ear flaps, winter moccasins, and ceremonial headdresses.

Soft-dressed buffalo skins without the hair were used for lodge covers and linings, for pad saddles, and for winding sheets for the dead. The smoke-softened upper portions of old, worn lodge covers were salvaged, cut up, and reused for breechclouts and items of winter clothing—men's and boys' shirts, women's and girls' dresses, and leggings for both sexes. The thinner skins of buffalo calves were made into tobacco pouches and winter underpants worn by girls and women.

Buffalo horns made practical powder flasks for Blackfoot warriors. Horns were also fashioned into spoons, cups, and ladles. The long, shaggy hair of the head, beard, and shoulders was braided into rope halters and bridles. Hair supplied the soft stuffing for pad saddles and balls used in games. Hair ornaments hung from lodges, headdresses, and war clubs. The buffalo's tail also was used for tipi ornaments. Mounted on a stick, the tail served as a fly brush. Buffalo hoofs strung on rawhide cords made noisy rattles. The scrotum of a bull provided a durable stirrup cover. The Blackfoot Indians derived their best glue from a bull's phallus, cut into small pieces and boiled.

No less useful were many of the internal parts of this animal. Buffalo sinew supplied thread for sewing and a strong, flat cord for binding heads and feathers to arrowshafts. Bow strings and bow backings were both of twisted bull sinew. The brains, liver, and fat were rubbed into hides to soften them during the skin-dressing process. Buffalo fat also was used to polish stone tobacco pipes and to mix with earth pigments to provide an oily base for paints. A yellow paint could be obtained from the buffalo's gallstone. Water buckets were made from the paunch, and the bladder was used as a bag for marrow grease.

The boss rib of a buffalo made a serviceable tool for straightening arrowshafts. A series of curved ribbones furnished the runners for a boy's sled.

8: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

[ca. 1850]

which would show when the cases were in use. She did not bother to paint the backs, which would be hidden from view.

She used willow sticks for rulers in laying out the decorative fields, and as straight edges in painting the outlines of the geometric designs. She first outlined all the painted forms in a single color. Then she filled in the larger areas of the composition with the desired colors. Some women mixed their paints with hot water, which caused them to sink into the damp hide and become permanently fixed after the hide dried. Others applied to all the painted areas an overcoat of sticky glue, made by boiling the tail of a beaver or the clean, second-scrapings of buffalo hides. This thin coat of sizing gave the colors a glossy appearance.

After the paint dried, the craftswoman turned the rawhide over and removed the hair with a hide-scraper or a rock. Pounding the opposite side with a rock whitened the unpainted portions of the rawhide and made the colors stand out from the background. Finally, the woman cut the parfleches to their desired shapes with a sharp knife, folded them into envelope form, and burned the tie holes with a heated iron rod. The parfleches were finished.

Areas of rawhide remaining after the parfleches were cut out were not wasted. They were used for smaller containers or for resoles in repairing moccasins. Women made other rawhide cases in rectangular or cylindrical form and painted them. Those intended to hold sacred objects were decorated with long, cut-rawhide fringes.

Men made shields and drums of rawhide. To make a shield, the thick hide of a buffalo bull's neck was placed over a fire in the ground so that it would shrink and become still thicker and tougher. It was trimmed into a circular form about eighteen inches in diameter. Men painted on their shields sacred symbols such as buffalo, the sun, the moon, and stars, which they believed would protect them from their enemies' bullets and arrows. The belly hide of a horse was preferred for drumheads. It would not soften or stretch out of shape. To tighten a drumhead, they held it near a fire. Paintings on drums were also of sacred character.

8: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

532 Blackfoot painters used both native and trade pigments. Their
● 386 own colors were mostly mineral ones. Several reds were obtained from colored earths or crushed rock. By baking a gray or yellowish clay over ashes, they obtained a reddish brown. The spring buds of pussy willows provided another red. Yellow was a colored earth commonly found in the valley of the Yellowstone River. Buffalo gallstones furnished another yellow. White was an earth, and black was either earth or charcoal. Although the Blackfeet knew how to obtain a blue from dried duck dung and a green from plants growing near lakes, they preferred the blue and green from the trading posts.

Pigments were ground to a powder in small stone mortars, stored in little buckskin sacks, and mixed with hot water or glue extracted from boiled beaver tail or the underscrapings of a hide.

532 Paint brushes were pieces of porous bone cut from the edge of
413 a buffalo shoulder blade or hipbone. Their honeycomb composition held the paint and permitted it to flow smoothly onto the surface of rawhide or soft skin. Outlines were drawn with sharp-pointed brushes. Colors were spread over larger areas with the sides of the same brushes or with rounded-edged ones. A separate brush was used for each color.

462 As a general rule women painted only geometric designs on
532 rawhide cases, buffalo robes, and lodge linings. Men painted human or animal forms on their shields, drums, and lodge covers, and they recorded their successes at war on the inner surfaces of their buffalo robes.

532 The largest and most striking examples of Blackfoot Indian
342 painting were the larger than life-size representations of animals and birds depicted on the outer surfaces of their conical lodge covers. These primitive mural paintings portrayed the creatures which the tipi owners regarded as the sources of their supernatural powers. Each was painted in strict accordance with the [718] instructions the owner received in the vision or dream in which he obtained his power. The lodge owner called upon a man who was known to be a skilled painter. He told the artist what creatures to portray and where to locate them on the cover. The

9: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1955 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

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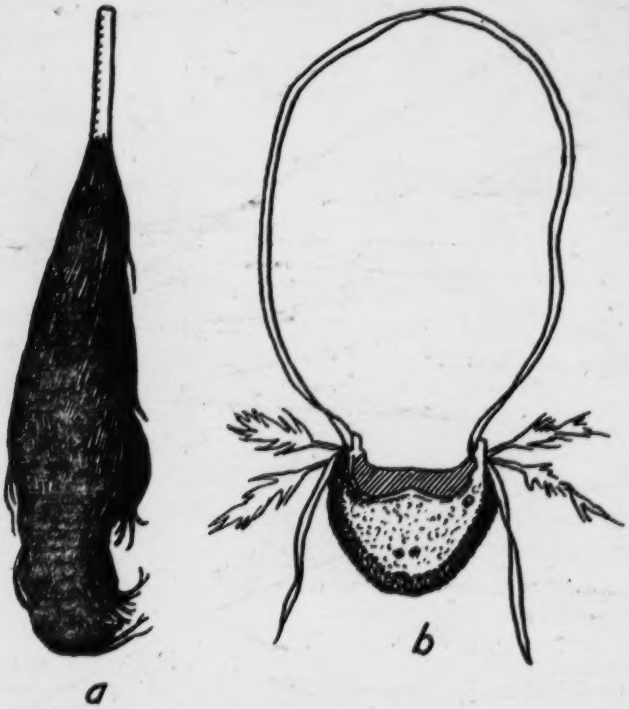

FIGURE 30.—Objects made of horse materials, Blackfoot. *a*, Horsetail asperger used in sweat-lodge ceremonies; *b*, horsehoof necklace worn by a weather dancer in the Piegan Sun Dance.

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386

USE OF HORSE MANURE

The manure of a newborn colt was used as a yellow paint rubbed over the sinew back of a bow or on arrow shafts. It dried hard and shiny, like glue, and would take a high polish.[70]

[70] Wilson (1924, p. 146) reported the use of this substance as an arrow paint by Hidatsa boys.

BIRTH CONTROL

824 In the matter of birth control, the Blackfoot practiced it in two ways.
842 Conception was thought to be avoided through the use of a special ceremonial
778 bundle and abortions were performed with the aid of an herbal brew. The
[847] former required the services of a diviner who professed the power to prevent
[771] conception while the latter was an event that could be accomplished by the mother alone.

[126] Several of these anti-conception bundles, constructed between 1880-1930,
[771] have been collected and the authors reported of at least fourteen more on the reservations of the Blackfoot, still being used by elderly diviners, all women.

[301] There is a consistant pattern of bundle contents (see Figs. 27 &28);
[237] otter-skin wristlets each with an incised bone bead, the design representing
● [386] a snake; yellow ochre in a skinbag; and a quantity of pulverized plant
[532] material in another skinbag. An exception to this pattern is the bundle
[291] collected by Ewers which contained a beaded, snake-shaped belt and lacked
[301] wristlets.

824 A woman seeking conception control would approach a diviner for
778 instruction in the use of the bundle. The diviner would, for a fee, use her
771 bundle on the patient or make one for her. Without going into the details
842 of the ceremony, we should note that the major part of the ritual involves
[302] the ochreing of the body from the head down to the navel and from the feet
[301] to the knees, thereby isolating the reproductive area. The wristlets were
[784] worn for a prescribed period during which time the patient was enjoined to
[825] observe certain taboos. The ceremony was usually performed in the spring when the snakes emerged from hibernation.

824 PLANTS IN CRAFT AND FOLKLORE

Abies lasiocarpa

The needles were used as a deodorant and were packed with stored items, saddle pads, or burned in a household smudge.

Acer glabrum

[386] [415] Small cases of the folded bark contained the grease which was mixed with ochre to make paint. A larger carrying case was made of the same material and worn under the left arm.

Allium spp.

[237] A piece of hide was dipped in a decoction of Allium bulb and used to shine arrows. The bulbs were also rubbed on quivers as a deodorant.

Amelanchier alnifolia

[431] [524] [222] Favors were asked while presenting a gift of four of the berries. The receiver was obliged to return the goodwill. Girls played a game while harvesting the berries. After some berries had been gathered the girls would sit together and hold their breath while another called out 'tops, tops, tops' at a regular beat. Each girl put a berry in her bag for every call and the one who held her breath the longest won all the other girls' berries.

Anemone patens

[522] [514] Because the plant acted as vesicant, pranks were played on unsuspecting people who would ask someone to fetch them some toilet paper. It worked especially well at night.

Arctostaphylos uva-ursi

534 [776] The dry berries were put in rattles (Fig. 33). They were preferred over stones because they were lighter and didn't make dust, a constant

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 109]

824 Castilleja spp.

[524] Children rubbed the flowers on their bouncing arrows for color and shine.

[386] Arrow feathers were dyed a light yellow by combining them with the flowers and keeping them under pressure for a few hours.

[281] The flowers were used to shine and waterproof hides.

The color forms were considered the effect of age, the sequence moving from white to red to yellow.

824 Clematis verticellaris
775
755

The plant, a creeping vine, was called "ghost rope" because it covered trees and bushes in a mysterious way. The leaves were used in the removal of "ghost bullets" (supernatural objects that were shot into people by ghosts). The bullets were removed by a diviner either with a sucking tube or through a slit in the skin made by a flint. Then the leaves were
[828] boiled and applied to the place where the bullets were removed. Fainting was often the result of coming near a ghost and the victim was revived with a smudge of the stem of this plant. At night, children wore the flowers in their hair to keep ghosts away.

824 Cornus stolonifera
773

According to a certain myth there was a time when the bark of this bush was white and not red. Naapi saw some gophers playing in the warm ashes of a campfire. They would bury each other in the ashes and when it got too hot they would cry out and the others would uncover them. Naapi joined the game and persuaded them all to get in the ashes. Only a pregnant gopher resisted and Naapi let her go, saying that she was necessary to propogate the species. Then he roasted the gophers and made a frame of cornus stolonifera which he used as a plate while he ate them. That was how the

[524] [773] bark turned red and to this day the grease from the gophers drips from the branches when they are heated.

[276] When the usual wood could not be found, the stems of C. stolonifera were used to make pipestems and tamps.

Delphinium bicolor

[386] The flowers were mixed in water and used to dye quills a light blue.

Elaeagnus commutata

This bush obtained the name "excrement smell" from the story of Naapi and the Gophers. Naapi punished his anus for failing to guard his roasted gophers from a lynx by hitting it with a branch of this plant. From that time on the wood smelled like excrement when it was burned and those who used it for firewood were chided for being lazy.

In craft, the seeds were cleaned, boiled, threaded and hung to dry. [301] Then they were greased and made into necklaces. Sometimes the seeds were [524] interspaced with Juniperus berries. Also, the bark of the bush was braided and used to whip the stone tops which children spun on the ice during winter. These whips usually lasted longer than the rawhide ones.

Epilobium angustifolium

[281] The flowers were rubbed on rawhide thongs and mittens for waterproofing.

[751] During the winter the powdered inner cortex was put on the hands and face to protect them from the cold. It was especially useful when the hands were uncovered for skinning, etc. When the powder was used, the hands would not hurt when they warmed up again.

Equisetum arvense

[524] Children used the plant to shine their bouncing arrows.

[751] The powdered stems were put in moccasins to avoid foot cramps when traveling long distances.

824 237 Also, the stems[A] were crushed and combined with porcupine quills which had been quartered longitudinally. Both were stored under pressure in a moose bladder-bag until the quills turned a light pink.

824 [386] [237] Evernia vulpina

A yellow dye was produced from pieces of this lichen which was combined under pressure with porcupine quills.

"Fish-backbone"

[281] The root was immersed in water which was later used to soak a green hide. Then the hide was stored for tanning.

Gaillardia aristata

[281] [758] The flower heads were rubbed on rawhide bags for waterproofing. Also, the flowerheads were used to absorb soups and broth and served as spoons for the sick and invalid.

Glycyrrhiza lepidota

The burrs of this plant received the name "Takes-a-Woman-By-Force" because, like a man to a woman, they attach themselves so readily.

[753] [755] It was believed that ghosts shot their victims with parts of the burr, thereby inflicting disease. If the "mysterious bullet" was not extracted by a diviner the patient was sure to die or his face would contort and he would go dumb.

[271] Buffalo runners kept the burrs in the mouth to protect against thirst.

Heracleum lantum

[534] 524 824 The hollow stems of the plant were made into children's flutes. They also served as toy blowgun, with bullets furnished by choke-cherry pits. Schaeffer records a variation of the blowgun idea amongst the South Peigan. Children would cut off a section of the dry stem and plug one end with a

[A]/The stems of Equisetum arvense--Analyst/

824
[281] Lomatium triternatum

Animal pelts which were used in bundles were stuffed with the fruits of this plant during the tanning process and that kept them from smelling.

[777] A porcupine foot was stuffed with the fruits and tied on a young girl's
[237] hair as a good luck charm.

Lonicera involucrata

[262] The bush was named "bear eats them" because the berries were considered inedible by humans.

Lygodesmia juncea

[294] The stems, rich in latex, were crushed, put in a storage bag and later
[281] used as foot pads in moccasins. Also, newly tanned buffalo hides were
[386] ochred red with a mixture of the stem and ochre which actually waterproofed the hide.

Mammilaria vivipara

[522] Jokes were played on people by placing this cactus under covers, etc.

Monarda fistulosa

[758] The dry flowerheads were used by invalids for sucking broth and soup.
[281] Women used the dry flowerheads to apply water to a green hide which made it easier to scrape the hide with even strokes.

Osmorhiza occidentalis

Pieces of the root were kept in quivers and clothing as a deodorant.
[294] The stems were combined with ochre and the mixture applied to robes.

Oxytropus sericea

524
824 Children made headdresses with the stems, lined up (alternating boys and girls) and danced single-file to different spots while singing this song in unison: "there's nothing behind my back". The seeds would rattle

524 824 in their pods. Then the leader would suddenly stop and look behind him while the others dropped to the ground. The leader struck whoever remained [278] [752] standing with a smoking stick which he carried. Then he took some of the seeds of the plant, chewed them and applied the mixture to the burn. Shortly the irritation stopped and the game continued with changing leaders.

824 Perideridia gairdneri

[827] The plant was rubbed on arrows for shine and waterproofing. Buffalo runners chewed the roots to extend their endurance.

Phlox hoodii

[386] Apparently, a dye was obtained from this plant in the way as Evernia.

Pinus spp.

773 824 The origin of coniferous forests was told in the story of the woman who married a snake and later pursued her brothers who had killed the snake-being. While the boys were fleeing southward, one of them threw a porcupine tail which magically created a forest that sprang up as a barrier to the woman's detached head which rolled in hot pursuit. The woman had the special power of seeing through anything and soon spotted the boys on the other side of the forest. Meanwhile they prayed for the trees to have children and so replenish the barrier between them and certain death at the hands of the woman. The story continues with the creation of the mountains, etc.

824 Five variations of conifer were distinguished: "curly pine" (from the lichen growths on the branches of Pinus contorta), "mean pine" (also "sweet pine", Abies lasiocarpa), "tomato scent pine" (Thuja spp.), "red pine" (Pseudotsuga menziesii?), and "cedar pine" (Juniperus spp.?).

000 Travois and tipi poles were made from Pinus contorta while the young

186 mode, they were often considered awkward and clumsy. For example, it is
522 said that they had to be taught to put ear-flaps on their lodges so that the smoke would be controlled.

824 This plant received the name, "Sarsi punctures-berry", because while the berries looked like the "real punctures-berry" (Ribes oxyacanthoides), they didn't taste as good and were considered "fakes".

524 Ribes oxyacanthoides
824

Children played a game with the berries of this bush. They sat in a circle and began counting to ten, each child counting one number around the circle. The tenth child would take five berries and eat them at once, trying his best not to show a bitter face. If he was successful, the child next to him would do the same and this would continue until one grimaced at the sour taste. He was then struck on the thigh with a knuckle-punch, thus giving the name "punctured-berry" to the plant. The child who never grimaced won all the others' berry supplies.

824 Rubus parviflora
[262]

The berries were considered inedible and the plant named "bear-eats-them" to denote the fact.

The berries were used to dye tanned robes. They were smeared over a
[386] [281] new hide and dried in the sun. Then they were scraped off and the hide polished until it shone.

The berry was applied to quivers to strengthen them.

Salix spp.

[534] A buzzing whistle was made by loosening the bark around a branch and blowing through it.

[352] The boughs were cut and used in making back-rest slats and sweatlodge
[343] frames.

824 [413] Spiraea densiflora

The flowering stems were used as paint brushes, especially on the large spaces of tipis.

Thacictrum occidentalis

The fruits were kept as a household and clothing deodorant and were often crushed and mixed with paint for a robe, etc.

Thermopsis rhombifolia

[796] The flowering of this plant signaled the time when the sponsorers of the Holy Lodge were to begin collecting buffalo tongues in preparation for [224] the Sun Dance. It was also the time when the buffalo were fat enough for good hunting.

[386] Arrow shafts were rubbed with the yellow petals for coloring.

Viola adunca

[386] Apparently, a blue dye was obtained from this plant which was used in dying arrows.

COSMETIC USES OF PLANTS

Abies lasiocarpa

302 824 314 [515] The resin of the tree was chewed for bad breath and pleasure. Some would chew the resin and spit it on their hands. An infusion of the needles was mixed with grease and applied as a hair tonic. The needles were kept for their fine odor. They were often packed in moccasins as a foot deodorant.

Artemisia campestris

An infusion of the root was used as a hair tonic, especially with [278] children. It cleansed as well as treated scalp infections.

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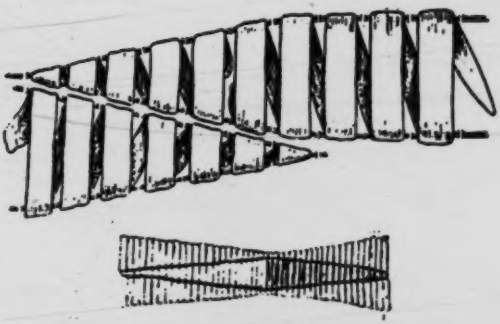

porcupine so that they form patterns and designs. This art[A] was first taught to the long-ago people by Thunder, according to our legends. Ever since then it has been regarded as a sacred craft. Those who wish to learn it and practice it go to an experienced elder to be initiated and instructed. There are yet several people who have been so initiated. However, my mother gave me the common tribal opinion that quillworkers go blind early, and often suffer from internal problems due to some kind of power in the quills.

[237] [173] [796] [753]

Porcupine quills were used in their natural shades, as well as dyed. All the main colors for dyeing were obtained from different plants, which were usually moistened, covered with quills, and then wrapped up until dry. By that time the color was usually soaked into the quills permanently. After colored cloth was introduced by traders, in the eighteen hundreds, some people dyed their quills by boiling them with pieces of cloth. Others in more recent times have used commercial dyes.

237 386 531 294

Quillworkers soak the quills in their mouths to soften them before they are sewed down. Among the basic supplies needed, in addition to quills of various sizes and colors (all kept in separate pouches—traditionally in dried and softened cow bladders), are many strands of rolled sinew, an awl, a

294 531 [415] [412]

[A] [i.e., porcupine quill decoration--Analyst]

20: Hungry Wolf I-4,5 (no date) 1980
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

long were the best. For that reason the skins of young porcupines were preferred. Old porcupines are larger than young ones, and have larger, thicker quills. I understand that these tend to split more easily when they are flattened between the teeth. The ones around the rear part of the animal are the best. An easy way to remove them from the hide is to pull a gunny sack back and forth across it. The quills will stick into the sack, from which you can pull them back out without getting stabbed.

The quills were used in their natural shades and also dyed. Long ago they had only a few basic colors, like red, yellow, and green. Later on they learned how to use articles from the traders as sources for dye. A favorite was the red-wool trade cloth, which was soaked and boiled with such things as quills and feathers, to turn them red. Still later, the traders caught on and began stocking boxes of dye, which the people used straight and mixed to make many shades of, usually, bright colors.

Besides going through a traditional initiation, the Blackfoot quillworker is supposed to follow a number of rules. For instance, it is said that quillworkers go blind if they ever throw a porcupine quill into a fire, or if they do quillwork at night. It is also said that a quillworker will prick her fingers a lot with the quills if she sews any moccasins in her home. She is not supposed to eat certain food, such as porcupine meat, nor should she allow anyone to pass in front of her while she is quilling.

BEADWORK

The beadwork of my grandmothers is well known among students of Native culture for its pleasing colors and designs, along with its tight and smooth appearance. The traditional Blackfoot beading style is the appliqué stitch, which requires the use of two threads simultaneously. One thread is used

Bundles lost or sold, the painted designs on our tipis are the same ones our oldest living People saw when they lived in the circle camps as children.

In the days when the first white men came to visit our People, tipis were made of buffalo hides and designs were painted with natural colors, usually various shades of our Mother Earth. From her comes the sacred red paint we apply to our faces, bodies, and holy objects, as well as our tipis. The red paint represents our Earth Mother, the blood within our bodies, and also the color of our Father, Sun, in the morning and evening.

There are many types and shades of red earth, but only two kinds are used for sacred purposes. One is *Nitsisahni*, or "real paint," which is fairly bright red and the most commonly used shade. The other red paint is called the "seventh paint," because it is most often used in Medicine Pipe ceremonies where the number seven is sacred. Darker than real paint, it contains a substance that gives it a greasy feel and a shiny appearance. The Old People say that if sacred paint is not gathered properly with many prayers and good thoughts, it will turn into plain dirt before it can be used.

Other sacred paint colors include black, usually made from powdered charcoal; yellow, made

[p. 67-B]

from a clay, though it used to be made from buffalo gallstones; and green, made from a certain type of algae. 386 778 [237]

In the Old Days, these natural colors were mixed with water and animal fat to form the paint that was applied to tipi covers. Brushes were made from buffalo bones. The bone was cut at one end, so that its pores were exposed to form the tip of the brush. These pores held the thick paint quite well. The natural paints had to be rubbed into the lodge covers very thoroughly, or else they would run with each rainfall. Even so, the natural colors tended to fade very quickly from constant exposure to the elements. Nowadays, we use the somewhat organic combination of oil paint and linseed oil, which has proved to be effective and durable. [824] 532 [237] [413] [178]

Painted tipis are usually given up as an offering whenever a new cover is made, as there should never be two copies of the same cover. The old cover is either offered to the Underwater Spirits by sinking it with rocks into a lake, or offered to Sun by leaving it weighed down by rocks out on the prairie. 782 532 342

Nevertheless, occasionally two or more covers having the same design can be found. In some cases, they represent similar dreams by different people. In other cases, they indicate a design not ceremonially transferred but inherited, and probably looked upon as a family heirloom or coat-of-arms to be reproduced in new tipi covers—usually by younger people unaware that they should not copy the design. And then there are those who know better, yet copy original designs on new covers and sell them to museums and collectors of "Indian relics." Finally, so-called Indian enthusiasts also contribute to the existence of multiple copies of the same design, when they make painstakingly precise but nonspiritual representations of some old design for their own tipis. 432 532 342 [787] [424] [428]

The Spirit of the Otter has inspired more designs than any other spiritual power. Our own Otter Tipi was one of four similar ones at last 532 342 [776]

[p. 68-A]

[Beaver Bundle Ceremony]

cawing like a crow. R Wolf then took a piece of meat from the stewed tongues, a dish of which had by that time been placed in front of each person, and after praying to the earth, shoved the meat between the cracks of the floor in front of him. All the others prayed and did likewise and the feast began. [Before we eat a ceremonial meal we always break off a piece of meat and hold it up toward the Spirits of the Universe, while giving a prayer of thanks. At the end of the prayer we say, "Oki, this piece is for you, Spirits of the Earth," thus symbolizing our request that our Earth Mother share her food with us.] 796 778 264 [533] [825] [782]

Singing was renewed at 1:40. Two little sacks containing red and black paint were taken from the outfit, and R Wolf extracted a particle of the Red Paint and held it towards the altar as he sang. Next he put a small bunch of wool in left hand, poised the paint with right, and finally placed paint with the wool rolled both together and deposited them upon the altar. The same was done with the black paint, after which the squaws painted a child's face red and black. One of the men present (Cut Face) brought his child, a boy, and kneeled in front of R Wolf, laid a dollar bill at the latter's feet and waited while the child's face was painted as follows. Running Wolf continued singing with the other musicians who all rattled; covering the palms of both hands with a mixture of red paint and grease, after many waves to and from the altar, he applied the paint all over the face of the now kicking and struggling child who tried in vain to free himself from the grasp of his father who held him throughout. At the end of his process Running Wolf made a long prayer and then rubbed the stuff off his hands. 796 778 302 852 [533] [386] [782]

Renewing his singing, he mixed the black in same way and after striping the boy's face [painting a black stripe over the red paint], indulged in a 2nd elaborate prayer; he also painted a black ring around each wrist. The striping of the face consisted in a single black stripe down the middle of the face from forehead, at base of hair, to chin, [782]

applied as a poultice to boils. Covered with a bandage, the seeds dried up the boil, which pulled off when the bandage was removed. The roots of the rose bush could be brewed into a bitter, red-colored drink to treat diarrhea. 757 824

CUT-LEAVED ANEMONE (*Anemone multifida*): This plant is called "looks-like-a-plume," because of the wooly tops of its fruiting heads. This wooly material was burned on a hot coal and inhaled for headaches. 824 757

INDIAN HEMP (*Apocynum cannabinum*): Known as "little blanket" or "many spears," this plant is usually found in dense brush and on high cliffs. The roots were brewed to make a laxative or a hair wash. The dried leaves were sometimes smoked. 824 757 515 276

LARKSPUR (*Delphinium*): Known as "blue leaves," the leaves were brewed for kidney troubles; the brew also made a good eyewash. 824 757

LOCOWEED (*Oxytropis*): These plants are known as "rattle sounds," because the ripe seeds inside the pods rattle in the wind. The leaves were chewed and the juice swallowed for sore throats and for coughing spasms in children. A brew was also made to treat sores on the head.

MINT (*Mentha arvensis*): The leaves of wild mint, or "strong smell," are still brewed into a popular tea, which is especially good for upset stomachs. When chewed and swallowed, the leaves are effective for chest pains. 824 757 [272]

OWL CLOVER (*Orthocarpus luteus*): These plants were given the name "dye" because they were boiled with porcupine quills, feathers, and skins to dye them red. The blue seed pods that form after the yellow leaves fall off were boiled into a drink and given to adults with chest pains and to children with constipation. 824 386 757 824

PRAIRIE CROCUS (*Anemone patens*): This plant came to be known as "early old man," because it matures and dries up quickly. The small root of the plant is still brewed and 824 844 847 757

[p. 187-A]

once used to decorate buckskin clothing, before traders brought glass beads to our People. Berries, too, were often strung to make necklaces and wristlets. They were made in this way: A fire was started with dry wood, then grease was dropped on the wood. The necklaces and wristlets were held in the greasy smoke until they were covered with an even layer of dark grease. Then they were polished with a soft piece of buckskin to a very pleasant finish. 824 [531] [301]

Berry stones were also placed inside rawhide rattles. [534]

DYES were made from a number of plants: owl clover made red; violet flowers made blue; some lichens were used to make green; and the roots of the Oregon grape, yellow. [386]

Plants also provided stuffing for pillows and saddles, and carpeting inside of tipis. Uses for their various woods ranged from fire fuel and holding up lodge covers to making bows, arrows, and traps.

BIRDS AND ANIMALS

Because the Old People lived their days with the birds and animals, the names they called them generally summarized an outstanding trait or characteristic. Some birds and animals are named for their similarity to others, often indicated by the prefix *big*. 825

This first list concerns the names of birds.

BIRD: The general word for bird is *piksi*, although the exact meaning has been lost. Small birds are *sitsi*; very small birds are *poksistsi*. 825

EAGLE: There are two kinds, the golden eagle and the bald-headed eagle. *Pitai* designates the golden eagle; *ksikichkinni*, or "white head," the bald eagle.

HAWK: The hawks as a group are *aiinnimaiaks*, or "scizers." The large rough-legged

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33: Bradley G-3 (1871-1877) 1923
NF6 Blackfoot NF6

frequently went into action entirely naked. The dress of the Blackfeet was very decent at all seasons, the body being entirely covered, the women being as sensitive to any exposure of the person as their white sisters. Little children, however, were sometimes allowed to run naked, though the girls were usually clothed as soon as they began to walk. When cotton and woolen stuffs were introduced by the traders the men took to their use quite readily, but the women were more conservative and it was long before they learned to substitute cotton or woolen for their former skin gown.

Dye Colors

The colors used in dyeing the porcupine quills, horsehair and feathers employed as trimming were red, yellow and black. The red was obtained from the bull berry, the yellow from the root of a plant, and the black apparently from pulverized lignite, of which they had an abundance in their country. These colors were prepared for use as a paint by mixing with glue obtained from the hoofs of the buffalo. With this compound they often lavishly ornamented buffalo robes, saddles, bags, lodges and shields with nude figures of people and animals. Other colors were introduced by the traders and readily adopted.

Head Covering

Neither men nor women ordinarily wore any covering on the head. For special occasions, however, the men were provided with war bonnets of elaborate workmanship. This consisted of a cap of buffalo hide, usually supporting a pair of horns jutting out from the sides in imitation of the buffalo, ornamented with feathers, porcupine quills, strips of ermine, horse hair, and frequently a long streamer hanging down behind reaching often nearly to the feet. The feathers were arranged in a row around the head, and, meeting behind, followed the streamer down the back, standing out like the teeth of a saw. The only feathers used were those of the American eagle, which were scarce and valuable; they were not dyed, but were often tipped with red horse hair streamers. The best war bonnets were very gaudy, often handsome, and were esteemed in value equal to a horse.

joints of garments or containers by covering them with bands of decoration in beadwork or quillwork, or adding an ornamental skin fringe. This way of hiding the seams is demonstrated in the decoration of men's dress shirts made by the Blackfeet. Invariably, the long sleeve seams of the shirts are covered with decorated bands of ornamentation. (See illustration on page 47.)

The preparation of skins, and their manufacture into useful articles were laborious, time-consuming, even monotonous women's tasks. But they were very necessary ones for the Blackfeet. Most White people are inclined to overlook work in skins in favor of the more colorful and striking decorative arts of painting, quillwork and beadwork. It is not so with Indians. They are quick to notice and approve a finely dressed skin of soft, even texture and color, or a well made skin article. They are quick to reject a poorly dressed skin or a careless piece of sewing. Of the four major crafts, work in skins was certainly of basic importance. Women who were especially skilled in this work had a right to be proud of their ability.

PAINTING

Next to the dressing and sewing of skins, painting is probably the oldest of the major Blackfeet arts or crafts. Certainly it dates back to prehistoric times. Early traders and explorers found the Blackfeet living in painted lodges and wearing painted buffalo robes. The materials used in painting were readily obtained in the Blackfeet country.

Paints

Native paints were both numerous and ingenious. They were derived from animal, vegetable and mineral sources. Earth paints were most common. The Blackfeet employed a half-dozen different reds, providing colors of several hues and intensities. Red paints were prepared from crimson colored earth, and crushed, pale, reddish-yellow rock. A reddish brown was obtained by baking a gray or yellowish clay over ashes until it turned red. In the spring of the year the

[P.14-A]

buds of the pussy willow were picked, kept over night, and made into still another red paint. Yellow was found in the form of colored earth especially common beside the Yellowstone River. Buffalo gall stones provided another yellow. For blue they used a duck manure from the lakes of their country where wild ducks were plentiful. It was dried in the sun and then mixed with water. Old full-bloods still are inclined to use the same color names for both blue and green, although they readily recognize the difference between the two colors on sight and affirm that their people used them both in their painting in the old days. They say green came from a colored mud or from plants growing near lakes. Some say Blackfeet also knew how to mix native blue and yellow to make green. White paint was obtained from white earth. Lewis and Clark named the present Beaver Creek near Helena, which they passed in 1805, White Earth Creek, because they learned that the Indians were accustomed to dig white paint beside that stream. Both charcoal and black earth furnished black paint.

Of all colors, red was most commonly used in painting by the Blackfeet. Red earth was applied liberally to the surfaces of sacred objects used in ceremonials. Blackfeet ceremonial bundles usually contain numerous sacred objects completely covered with red paint.

The trader, Alexander Henry, listed ten different pigments employed by the Piegan division of the Blackfeet in "painting and daubing their garments, bodies and faces" in the early years of the nineteenth century. It is possible that some of these were colors obtained from the traders even at that early date. Certainly in more recent times commercial paints have replaced native colors to a very large extent in Blackfeet painting.

Preparation of Paints

The native pigments were ground to a powder in small stone mortars. Each color was kept separately in a skin bag closed at the neck by a buckskin drawstring. In use,

[P.14-B]

the paints were mixed with hot water in a clam shell cup, or mixed with the glue extracted from boiling in water the tail of a beaver or the white, clean underscrapings from a hide. 386 [415] [237]

Painting Tools

In addition to paints of different colors, the Blackfeet artist's kit contained a number of straight, peeled, willow sticks of different lengths which served as rulers in marking or painting straight lines on rawhide or soft skin. Some outfits also included one or more flattened sticks for marking lines on a hide by pressure alone, before paint was applied. Every outfit had a number of bone paint brushes for applying the color. These brushes were cut from the porous edge of a buffalo shoulder blade or the end of a buffalo hip bone. The honeycomb composition of the brushes enabled them to hold the paint and permitted it to flow rather smoothly onto the surface of the rawhide or soft skin. Some of these brushes were pointed for painting fine lines, others were rounded for spreading color over larger areas. The sides of the bone brushes also 413 [824] [237]

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23. The porcupine.

met White men. In historic times quillwork always has been women's work. 531 [462]

Porcupine Quills

The western porcupine has been a native of the Blackfeet country throughout the historic period. Porcupines are still abundant on and near the modern reservations of the Blackfeet in Montana and Alberta. The tail and most of the body of the porcupine are covered with hollow, cylindrical quills. Porcupine quills are of a whitish color with black tips. They vary in diameter and length. The largest quills, from the tail of the animal, are about five inches long and one-eighth inch in diameter. The finest, from the belly, are scarcely an inch in length and very thin. Intermediate sizes appear on the animal's back and neck. The Blackfeet rarely used the smaller quills in embroidery. The average porcupine yields about 8 ounces of quills. They are very light in weight, averaging about 4,000 to the ounce. 136 237 531 237

Dyeing Porcupine Quills

In Blackfeet quillwork some of the quills were used in their natural color, others were dyed to enable the craftswoman to work out attractive polychrome designs. Native dyestuffs were of vegetable origin. Before dyeing, the basal tip of each quill was broken off. Elderly Indians recalled that the quills were dyed by dampening a quantity of the dye plant in water, placing a number of quills on top of it, and wrapping them together in a piece of buckskin. The package was placed under the woman's bed on the ground inside the lodge, where it was pressed by the weight of her body for a 237 386 824 237 386

[P-28-A]

41: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1944) 1945
NF6 Blackfoot NF6

couple of nights. When the package was unwrapped the color of the plant would have penetrated the quills. The pine tree lichen, (Evernia Vulpina), was a favorite source of yellow dye. Its use for dying porcupine quills by the Blackfeet was mentioned by Maximilian in 1833. A red water plant or a red root supplied the red dye. A green water plant or a green grass served for dyeing quills green. A blue colored plant furnished the blue coloring matter. However, the Blackfeet early learned to dye quills by

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26. Buffalo calfskin bag containing quill worker's equipment.

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boiling them in water with a quantity of colored trade cloth. This method was common in Maximilian's time. Nevertheless, despite the widespread use of commercial dyes, some Blackfeet women continued to employ native dyes within the memory of elderly Indians still living. Generally the plant dyes imparted a more delicate coloring to the quills than did the strong commercial dyes. 237 386 [177] [178]

The Quillworker's Tools and Methods

Elderly Blackfeet say that quillwork was regarded as a sacred craft by their people. Girls or young women were taught the craft by the older women. First the younger women were initiated ceremonially into the art of handling the sharp-pointed quills. It was claimed that women who attempted to do quillwork without having first experienced this ceremony would surely "go blind" or suffer from a swelling of the finger joints. Then they were taught how to use the tools of the quillworker's craft and how to employ the various methods of quill sewing, plaiting and wrapping known to their elders. Quills of the same size in assorted colors were kept in long, cigar shaped, bladder containers until ready for use. The quillworker's kit also included one or more bone or metal awls for making holes in the skin, a quantity of sinew thread for passing through these holes in attaching the quills to the surface of the skin, and a bone or horn instrument for pressing and flattening the quills after they had been sewn to a flat surface. The Blackfeet quillworker held quills in her mouth to soften them, then flattened them between her teeth and put them in place at once. It was customary for a beginner to give her first piece of quillwork as an offering to the sun. 237 [462] [868] [153] [415] [412] [283] [413] [182]

Articles Decorated with Quills

Today quillwork is almost a lost art among the Blackfeet. However, accounts written more than a century ago refer to quillwork as a flourishing decorative art in which Blackfeet women were very pro- 237 531 294

My father and I both set up our lodges at the Starr School encampment, and Makes-Cold-Weather, a friend of mine from the North Blackfoots, assisted Little Bear and myself in hauling in the poles for the Medicine Lodge. 159 796 346

When the Medicine Lodge had been completed, Makes-Cold-Weather asked me to go with him to the slaughter house in Browning to get some meat. On the way we met a rider, and Makes-Cold-Weather informed me that this lone rider was a very powerful medicine man from Gleichen [the North Blackfoot Reserve]. He said, "This man was injured, and a steel plate was placed in the back of his head, and since that time he has had great power from the Thunder. He owns the Thunder Lodge, and he has painted many people." [One of the functions of a medicine man was to paint the faces of individuals in order to insure their good health and fortune. In return, the medicine man received a gift of either money or some object of value such as a blanket or some fine beaded work.] 159 796 756 [302] [75] [777] [431]

When the Thunder Medicine Man drew even with us, he reined in his horse close to mine and looked into my face and said, "I have been looking for you for a long time." I did not know what he meant, I had never seen him before. But when he spoke to me a chill ran up my back and I felt very strange—sort of a mixture of fear and reverence. I did not know what to say, so I said nothing. Nor did the Medicine Man speak again; for a minute he continued to look deep into my face, as though he could see right through me, and then he rode on.

Upon returning to my lodge I learned that each separate encampment had decided to have its own Sun Dance, each with its own Holy Woman. Early the next morning, when I went to my father's lodge to invite him over for breakfast, I saw that the Thunder Medicine Man had erected the Thunder Lodge on the far edge of our encampment. The Thunder Lodge is easily distinguishable because it is painted with the Thunder Paint. [The Thunder Paint is blue paint; the Thunder Lodge is painted a solid blue, with no other decoration.] [346] [386]

After breakfast I accompanied my father back to his lodge, and as we sat talking we heard someone singing. Stepping outside the lodge, we saw that the Thunder Medicine Man had piled his goods [his fees for face painting] on top of a nearby hill; he was seated up there, singing medicine songs, and when he saw that my father and I were looking at him he stopped singing and told me with signs that he wished me to go up

122 123 798 Then the Chief spoke to Jim, and Jim went into the Chief's room and came back carrying an extremely old pouch of buffalo hide. I recognized it as a Blackfoot man's medicine pouch, quite large, painted with Indian designs, and with fringe more than two feet long. The Chief opened the pouch and showed its contents to me one by one. There were four large rattles of hardened rawhide—very, very old; a lock of hair from a buffalo tail; a small piece of hair-on buffalo hide which served to line the bottom of the pouch; and a sueded buckskin sack, colored with *nits-i-sahn*, a dull-red paint which the Blackfoots produce by burning a certain kind of clay, containing four buffalo stones (*I-nis-kim*). The buffalo stones are the darndest things I have ever seen. They are natural formations—not altered in any way except to be colored by *nits-i-sahn*—and although I was able to identify three of them as fossils and the fourth as probably an odd-shaped stone of sedimentary origin, it required very little imagination to see them as the Indians do, as tiny buffaloes. The pouch and its contents were an inheritance from the Chief's father, and his father before him. They obviously meant a great deal to the Chief, and I admired them lavishly. I nearly flipped when he told me that they were mine.

[534] [386] [428]

Before I could recover from my astonishment, the Chief spoke to Jim again and Jim went again into the Chief's room and returned this time holding a bundle carefully wrapped in old trade cloth and tied with strips of buckskin. I learned that the bundle contained two Blackfoot Medicine Pipes, two pairs of rustic wooden tongs, some sweetgrass braided into a queue, *nits-i-sahn* paint, and several other articles. I had thought that I was to receive a Pipe tomorrow, after the Beaver Ceremony, but instead I received it tonight.

122 123 798 276 The Medicine Pipe is not to be confused with the so-called "peace pipe" which was a smoking pipe and was a rather common article among Plains Indians. The Medicine Pipe, which is really one portion of the Medicine Pipe Bundle, is a purely religious article and cannot be smoked.* According to best authority, there were never more than seventeen Medicine Pipes among all three tribes of the Blackfoot Nation, and it is a rare privilege nowadays even to see a Medicine Pipe, let alone own one.

425 798 796 No two medicine pipes are exactly alike; the owner of each pipe

[796] [782] * I know of only one exception to this rule. During the Sun Dance, if a very special prayer is to be offered to the Sun, the Sun Pipe may be fitted with a bowl and smoked by those inside the Medicine Lodge. Such occasions are very, very rare.